

Good evening, Members of the Committee.

My name is Kevin Hinchey.

My background is in filmmaking and writing, and for 16 years I've been an adjunct at Manchester Community College and, more recently, also at Middlesex.

I'm here to speak on behalf of increasing the block grant to CSCU system...

...our educational entity which serves a distinctive and exciting tapestry of students.

And I can easily conjure up so many memories of those I've taught:

For example, a dynamic freshman living in a motel room with her mother because of a home-life gone bad...

...and for whom I later wrote Letters of Recommendation to her two colleges of choice: Smith and Wellesley.

She was accepted at both and graduated from Smith.

I think of returning veterans of the Iraqi War—men and women—all of them motivated, respectful, and supremely grateful to be back in the classroom.

I remember students courageously forging their way as the first in their families to attend college...

...and proudly telling me that much was expected of them.

I recall the pupils who walked me to my car after our Monday night classes, simply for the chance to talk.

And I'll never forget my youngest student: a 16-year old at M.C.C.'s Great Path Academy...

...who emailed me a few years ago to tell me she was thriving as a film major at University of North Carolina.

I still smile at the many thankful notes from students, handwritten in their bluebooks at the end of their final exams...

...or typed in at the end of their online exams during COVID.

And I'm still saddened by the heartbreak of promising students who fell away when circumstances made their pursuit of education no longer tenable.

Whatever the specifics of our students, all of my colleagues would agree that in terms of our skills and our engagement...

...we owe these students our full measure. And we live up to that aspiration.

But in return, we too are owed something...

...we the part-timers, the heavy lifters, who give of ourselves as equally as our full-time colleagues.

We too are owed something...

...we, who confer with our students in make-shift cubicles, on couches in hallways, and in campus parking lots.

As teachers, as stewards of those striving in our classrooms to better their lives, we deserve to be treated with the dignity of our profession.

We are owed at least that...

...rather than the current indignities of an arbitrary business-model that has somehow infected higher education nationwide...

...an unconscionable business-model that higher education has shamefully bought into...

...that decrees that much of our student population will now be taught by hundreds and thousands of part-timers...

...who will be paid per course at a mere fraction of what our full-time colleagues earn for their classes...

...And all this without any safety net of health benefits or job security.

This is admittedly a nationwide practice, beyond the scope of any single committee, legislature or state.

But here in Connecticut, a state of many historic “firsts”—starting in 1639 with our Fundamental Orders—

...let this be another “first”.

Please, choose to lead by example legislatively and responsibly...

...and take the first steps in granting us the dignity we deserve and which is long overdue.

Please, vote in favor of this block grant.

Thank you for your time.